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December 7, 2007

Dear Senators Baucus and Grassley and Representatives Rangel, McCrery, Stark, Camp, Dingell, Barton, Pallone, and Deal,

On behalf of the 34,000 members of the American College of Cardiology (ACC), I am writing to thank you for your continued efforts to develop a comprehensive Medicare reform legislative package that includes halting the scheduled 10 percent cut in physician reimbursement and other provisions to improve quality and patient access to care. It is absolutely critical that Congress act on this package prior to adjournment to avoid any unnecessary disruptions to patient care.

As you work with other congressional leaders toward a resolution on this critical Medicare reform package, the ACC respectfully requests that you include the following elements:

- Replace the scheduled 10 percent cut in 2008 with a positive update and do so in such a way that does not make the cuts steeper and more costly in future years;
- Establish a Medicare pilot project to test appropriateness criteria that determine how utilization rates are affected when these criteria are used by physicians and facilitate appropriate quality care;
- Preserve Medicare beneficiaries' access to quality imaging services by refraining from further cuts in payments for imaging services; and
- Continue to fund the Physicians Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) for 2008 and create a pathway for the use of data registries that collect valuable clinical information for performance measurement and quality improvement.

The ACC greatly appreciates your strong commitment to improving access and ensuring high quality care for our nation's seniors. We stand ready to work with you to enact legislation that protects beneficiaries' access and moves Medicare toward a sustainable course that improves quality care and preserves it for future generations.

Sincerely,

James Dove, M.D., F.A.C.C.
President, American College of Cardiology

Cc: Jack Lewin, M.D., CEO, American College of Cardiology

